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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2008

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PRESS RELEASE

USAID helps Macedonia to develop a skilled workforce

On May 14th, the USAID Competitiveness Project organized the Workforce Development Conference, bringing together all stakeholders in workforce development in Macedonia. During the conference, the project presented its labor market assessment and proposed interventions, including internships, training certification programs, and industry led education activities.

"A skilled workforce is a critical pre-requisite for economic development," said USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader. "Through the Competitiveness Project, USAID is supporting structural changes and new workforce development activities that will ultimately create new jobs and increase Macedonia's global competitiveness."

"Our experience proves that new graduates are knowledgeable and have excellent theoretical grounding, but they lack practical skills in business operation," commented Ivan Mitrevski, Executive Director of the Macedonian Association for Information Technology (MASIT). "Employers have to invest significant resources in additional training, which is a burden that limits their growth. A permanent dialogue and cooperation between academia, government and businesses is essential."

The conference is expected to be the first step towards a sustainable forum where all relevant stakeholders, such as education institutions, government institutions, human resources companies, training providers, business associations, chambers of commerce, local companies and foreign direct investors will continue to develop efficient solutions to bridge the existing gap between the supply and demand sides of labor market in Macedonia.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that increase investment, create jobs, reduce corruption and improve the quality of education in Macedonia. These initiatives support Macedonia's transition to a stable democracy and its successful integration into the European Union. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.